

## SERVICE CENTER UPDATE

## Service Center Spirit Soars

From left, front row: Central Elementary School coloring contest winners: 3rd Place - Hunter Sills; 2nd Place - Sara Wherrell and 1st Place - Carrie Wharin. From left, second row: Sponsors Tabitha Trent from Riverside National Bank and Lora Gardner of the District Okeechobee Service Center.

## Okeechobee Service Center

**District sponsors a colorful Earth Day in Okeechobee**

Colorful Freddy the Friendly Alligators have adorned the halls at the Okeechobee Service Center for the past month as the annual coloring contest for Central and Everglades Elementary Schools in Okeechobee County showcased the talents of many of the areas finest artists. All grades, including special education classes, at both schools were invited to participate in the contest that offered prizes such as \$25 savings bonds for first place. Sponsoring partners in the ever-popular Earth Day event include the Bank of America, Riverside National Bank and the District.

## Orlando Service Center

**Workshop explains water issues**

As the flow of new residents continues unabated in Central Florida, water supply development is as critical to the boom as roadways and schools. To update local governments on water-supply development initiatives and recent legislative action to assist in the creation of alternative water supplies, the Orlando Service Center hosted its inaugural Municipal Water Academy on May 19. The half-day seminar was a cooperative partnership with the Tri-County League of Cities the University of Central Florida's Institute of Government, and the St. Johns River Water Management District.

## Palm Beach County Service Center

**Earth Day celebration highlights hands-on learning**

The District partnered with other agencies to celebrate Earth Day on April 23 at the Okeehelie Nature Center in West Palm Beach. Attendees played the popular Enviro-Wheel game, took guided nature walks, watched live animal presentations and visited interactive, hands-on booths hosted by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Earth Foundation, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation

Commission, Florida Power & Light Co., Okeehelie Nature Center, Palm Beach County Solid Waste Authority, Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resources Management, Palm Beach County Department of Health, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the District.

This young Earth Day participant shows off his Freddy the Friendly Alligator soda cooler and tattoo he 'won' while playing water education games.

## Florida Keys Service Center

**Keys residents plant it smart**

The Nature Conservancy held its 6th Annual Native Plant Fair on May 14. More than 1,400 plants, all native to the Florida Keys, were given away for free to the community. This year's event was held in Key Largo at Plantation Key School and drew over 500 attendees, who treated themselves to not only plants, but also free presentations on Keys gardening. Those who were not sure which of the 27 different species they wanted for their yards received guidance from Master Gardener volunteers who helped them choose the right tree, shrub or groundcover for their sunny, shady or salt-sprayed yards. The few plants that were left over at the end of the event were donated to Plantation Key School, Big Pine Charter School, Camp Sawyer Boy Scout Camp and Brinton Environmental Center Boy Scout Camp. The District sponsored the event and Pennekamp State Park donated 400 plants.



Everyone has a green thumb – Keys style – at the Native Plant Fair in Key Largo.

**Eco-Discovery****Center gets Congressional support**

Governing Board Member Michael Collins and Florida Keys Service Center Director Cecelia Weaver participated in a meet-and-greet with U.S. Congresswoman Ileana Ross-Lehtinen during the video taping of a public service announcement for the world-class, interagency Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center. The District is one of four agency sponsors for this environmental education facility, which is scheduled to open in fall 2006.

## Broward Service Center

**Water control structure dedication marks completion of a critical Everglades restoration project**

On April 19, the District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, along with our state and local partners, celebrated the completion of the S-381 water control structure as the final step in the Western C-11 Water Quality Treatment Project in southwest Broward County. The project is a component of the Critical Projects restoration program, and will separate clean seepage flows from stormwater flow, to ensure that clean water flows into Water Conservation Area 3A. The Corps completed construction on a portion of the project, the S-9a pump station, in 2002 and the S-381 spillway structure was completed in March 2005. The project has now been turned over to the South Florida Water Management District as the local sponsor, and it will provide immediate water quality and timing benefits.

**WaterFest makes splash**

Hundreds of kids of all ages made waves at 2005 WaterFest on May 21 at Quiet Waters Park in Deerfield Beach for a day of learning and play. The South Florida Water Management District hosted the family-oriented, fun-filled event to promote water conservation. Event-goers immersed themselves in all kinds of water-themed activities and games, as well as enjoyed food and music.



Pick me! Pick me! Local fifth- and sixth-grade St. Lucie County students eagerly ask District staffer Gardenia Long questions during a field day at the Oxbow Eco-Center.

## Martin/St. Lucie Service Center

**Students spend a day in the field at the Oxbow Eco-Center**

What a great day for more than 400 fifth- and sixth-graders, 15 teachers and 30 parents who came to the 1st Annual Environmental Studies Day at the Oxbow Eco-Center in Port St. Lucie to participate in a day of fun and learning. The students were given an opportunity to visit more than 10 stations that focused on a different aspect of the environment: ecosystems; air, water, and living organisms; tree/leaf identification; invasive plants and animals; water quality; and other topics and issues. Each station had a creative way of getting the students involved by participating in crafts, games of skill, interactive songs, role-playing skits, and identification hikes or similar hands-on experiences that were both educational and fun.

Each activity station was hosted by a local organization from the St. Lucie County community. The highlight of the day was the "Wheel of Water Fortune." Each student had an opportunity to play the fortune game and win a prize. The event was sponsored by the District, St. Lucie County School District, St. Lucie County and Gulf Stream Council.



Governing Board Member Pamela Brooks-Thomas opens the environmentally friendly Obermeyer gate of the new S-381 spillway structure. It has no moving parts, allowing manatees and other wildlife to safely maneuver through the canal.



WaterFest volunteer Brandey Jackson adds a hint of art to the face of one of the event-goers.